



News Release

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Utah's Phoenix Alliance Says "Make Your Parents Proud for a Change" by Entering Truth Anti-Tobacco Advertising Contest

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Utah's Phoenix Alliance anti-tobacco youth advocacy group is helping the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) launch the eighth annual Truth from Youth Anti-tobacco Advertising Contest. Youth volunteers will be making presentations in schools, doing media interviews and holding special events to urge kids to enter the contest.

The Truth from Youth contest invites students ages five to 18 to create radio, TV and billboard anti-tobacco ads for cash prizes. Thousands of contest information packets are being mailed to schools statewide for anti-drug and tobacco Red Ribbon Week activities in October.

"We are excited about this year's contest theme 'Make your Parents Proud for a Change,'" said Peter Moosman, a Phoenix Alliance youth leader. "Sometimes kids can do crazy things. Entering the Truth from Youth Advertising Contest is a fantastic way for kids to make their parents proud and learn about the dangers of smoking."

Each day more than 2,000 people between the ages of 12 and 17 become regular smokers. That is more than one million teens per year. Roughly one-half of them will eventually die from a tobacco-related disease. Although adult smokers quit, a steady supply of teens move in to replace them. Data show teens are the primary source of new smokers, and almost no one starts smoking after the age of 19.

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"Research has shown youth are generally resistant to many kinds of anti-tobacco messages. When kids hear the message from other kids not only do they listen, but they can become advocates themselves," said Lena Dibble, tobacco campaign media coordinator, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, UDOH. "By creating their own radio, TV or billboard ad, kids get the chance to express themselves and tell other kids what they think of Big Tobacco."

Last year, more than 13,000 students from many Utah schools and organizations sent in 7,761 entries. The UDOH is distributing thousands of contest information packets and posters this month to every teacher in the state. The contest is a curriculum tool used by many Utah teachers. Throughout the year, Phoenix Alliance members statewide will make anti-tobacco presentations to schools and youth groups to teach new facts about tobacco's harmfulness and encourage contest participation. "Make your parents proud for a change, enter the contest," said Moosman.

Contest entries are grouped in elementary, junior and senior high school categories, with cash prizes of \$300 for first place, \$200 for second and \$100 for third. Best of contest winners will receive \$400 and have the opportunity to help produce their ads. The contest deadline is March 1, 2005.

For more information about the contest or the Phoenix Alliance call (801) 256-4924 or (801) 531-0533, or visit the web site at www.youthagainsttobacco.com.

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